

REMARKS

Summary of the Amendment

Upon entry of the present Amendment, Claims 25 and 31 will have been canceled and Claims 20, 26, 28, 30, 32, and 33 will have been amended. Accordingly, Claims 20-24, 26-30, 32, and 33 remain pending in the present application. By the present Amendment and Remarks, Applicant submits that the rejections and objections have been overcome, and respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application.

Canceled Claims

Applicant canceled Claims 25 and 31 without prejudice or disclaimer and reserves the right to re-present these claims at a later time. As such, Applicant submits that the objections and rejections with respect to these claims are now moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw any objections and rejections directed to these claims.

Traversal of Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of Claims 20-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by MORIGAMI.

A Review of MORIGAMI

MORIGAMI teaches, in Fig. 13 and Column 10, lines 13 to 35, transferring a toner image onto a recording sheet held by a transfer drum 51 one to four times. Specifically, when the recording sheet is of a large size, the transfer drum holds one recording sheet. When the recording sheet is of a small size, the transfer drum holds two recording sheets. Moreover, MORIGAMI teaches the relation between the number of times of the rotation of the transfer drum and the timing of feeding recording sheets in accordance with the color mode for forming an image (one-color mode to four-color mode). For example, one or two new recording sheets are fed in a two-color mode every time the transfer drum rotates twice, and one or two new recording sheets are fed in a four-color mode every time the transfer drum rotates four times.

Independent Claim 20, 26, 28, 30, 32, and 33

Applicant's independent Claim 20, and similarly Claims 26, 28, 30, 32, and 33, as amended recite, *inter alia*, ... a separation control section controlling timing of starting a separating operation of a next document in the separating section based on the information on the material of the document inputted by the input section. MORIGAMI does not teach, for example, delaying the timing by 0.5 msec, in accordance with the material of the recording sheet when feeding the recording sheet.

On the other hand, MORIGAMI does not teach the aforementioned features. MORIGAMI's disclosure is not related to the smoothness of the surface in accordance with the material of the documents. In other words, MORIGAMI is not related to controlling the separating start timing of the next document in accordance with the material of the document at all.

For the foregoing reasons, because MORIGAMI fails to disclose the above-noted features of the present invention, Applicant submits that MORIGAMI fails to disclose each and every feature of the present invention as recited in Independent Claims 20, 26, 28, 30, 32, and 33. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejection of Independent Claims 20, 26, 28, 30, 32, and 33 be withdrawn.

Dependent Claims 21-24, 27, and 29

Applicant further submits that dependent Claims 21-24, 27, and 29 are allowable at least for the reason that these claims depend from allowable independent Claims 20, 26, and 28 and because these claims recite additional features that further define the present invention. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejection of dependent Claims 21-24, 27, and 29 be withdrawn.

Traversal of Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of Claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over MORIGAMI in view of ANDERSON. Assuming *arguendo* that the combination is proper, Applicant submits that the cited references singularly or in combination do not teach all the features of the claims.

As discussed above, Applicant submits that MORIGAMI does not teach *inter alia*, a separation control section controlling timing of starting a separating operation of a next document in the separating section based on the information on the material of the document inputted by the input section. Likewise, Applicant submits that ANDERSON does not teach these features.

Since MORIGAMI and ANDERSON fail to disclose the above-noted features of the present invention, Applicant submits that the references fail to disclose each and every feature of the present invention as recited in Claim 23. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejection of Claim 23 be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that none of the references of record anticipate or render obvious the Applicant's invention as recited in Claims 20-24, 26-30, 32, and 33. The applied reference of record has been discussed and distinguished, while the significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out. Further, any amendments to the claims which have been made in this response and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto. If any additional fee is required, please charge Deposit Account No. 502456.

Respectfully submitted,

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